

1 Peter 1:1 through 1 Peter 1:2 ¹Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ²Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Introduction

The Epistle of First Peter was written to encourage and strengthen the Jewish believers scattered throughout the northeastern part of Asia Minor. Their faith was being sorely tested through persecution and trials. Abounding in exhortations and references from Old Testament history, the epistle was very practical and helpful to the believing Jews as they daily faced severe times of testing. Sufferings and glory keynote the contents.

This epistle, although brief, is a clear summary of consolations and instructions which are needed for encouragement and direction by every Christian traveling through this world to his heavenly home. It helps to overcome all opposition and keep our hearts and minds on the fact that we are “strangers and pilgrims” in this world and have hope for a better home after faithfully traveling this life.

To establish the Christian in believing and doing, and to comfort in suffering, there are three dominate thoughts: faith, obedience and patience.

I. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ

Authorship

The epistle was written by Peter the fisherman, called to be an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was impulsive, forward, and self-confident, yet he was a true, loving and faithful disciple. He was one of the most colorful in character of all the disciples, and one with whom a good many of us more readily relate in our inner and outer conflicts of personal discipline. His epistles are seasoned with conflict and victory

Literary Form:

Students of 1 Peter have discussed widely the literary forms within the book. Many find extensive evidence of the presence of hymns, creeds, or fragments of sermons in such passages as 2:4-8 and 2:21-25. Some view the entire writing as a sermon preached at the baptism of a group of Christians. Peter made frequent reference to the Old Testament, sometimes by quotation (2:6-8) and sometimes by allusion (3:6,20). This frequent use suggests that Jewish readers were at least among the recipients of the letter.

Date:

Each chapter of 1 Peter contains a reference to suffering by someone (1:6-7; 2:21-25; 3:13-17; 4:12-19; 5:10). It is known that Nero brought persecution on Christians in Rome in the early 60s. Although the date is uncertain, it must have been written between the years a.d. 62 and 65.

II. The strangers = sojourners, exiles, foreign residents.

Jewish people spoke of Jews who lived outside Palestine as the “strangers” or those who were “scattered”; Peter transfers this term to his readers (cf. 1:17; 2:11).

The word is applied to those who settled in a town or region without making it their permanent place of residence. The readers, whose true citizenship was in heaven, are viewed as temporary residents of the provinces of Asia Minor named in this verse.

v. 1 [continued] ...Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia & Bythinia



The five Roman provinces he mentions were geographically connected; he omits the southern coastal regions of Asia Minor. The sequence in which Peter lists the provinces of his intended readers reflects the route a messenger delivering the letter could take if he started from Pontus. (Although messengers from Rome were more likely to start at the province of Asia, Peter may start in his mind with the province farthest from him and work his way around.)

First Peter is a general letter, influenced more by the situation in Rome than by the current situation in Asia Minor (what is now western Turkey); thus Peter can address it as a circular letter to many regions of Asia Minor (1:1). Peter does, however, seem to expect that the sufferings of Rome will eventually materialize in other parts of the empire.

III. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God *the Father*

In the Old Testament and Judaism, God's people were corporately "chosen," or "predestined," because God "foreknew" them; Peter applies the same language to believers in Jesus.

Foreknowledge: Ryrie's notes supply this definition: God's **prior knowledge** of all things, based on His relation to them, is the basis of our election. More than passive foresight, foreknowledge involves God's active consciousness of all that is to come to pass.

Another commentator supplies this definition: vs 2 To be "elect" or "chosen" is to be put into a special category - that of the redeemed, those born of God. Such election is not arbitrary, but in accordance with God's foreknowledge. But "foreknowledge" of what? It

could be simply God's foreknowledge of our response to the gospel - essentially the foreknowledge of our faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit sets one apart and causes one to be born of God, receiving a permanent indwelling of the Spirit, which affects one's attitudes and behaviors. This occurs after one believes. *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, (Ephesians 1:13)*

Being born of the Spirit one is both justified by the blood of Christ who is Savior, but also one is led into a life of obedience to Christ as Lord. The word for "obedience" is derived from the word "to listen". It is a listening type of obedience, like when parents say to their children "listen to me!" The elect pay attention to what God says and obey it.

I have good friends who are Calvinists, or Reformed in their view of salvation. A well-known reformed Baptist lists the order of salvation as: *predestination, creation, incarnation, propitiation, sanctification* and finally, *consummation*. In *predestination*, they would like us to believe that election took place *before foreknowledge*—that God chose some to eternal life, therefore they believed, with no real choice of their own but God's irresistible grace overcoming their unregenerate will to choose Christ. Consequently, God *foreknew* because He chose them and His will is always accomplished, never subject to choice of man. My problem with this is that Peter said the opposite is the order—foreknowledge *precedes* election. My other problem with reformed theology is that God's grace and will *is resisted* both individually in salvation and universally by mankind as they both sin and reject God's rule and reign.

IV. Through sanctification of the Spirit

Barnes: ...the two grand operations of grace...

Justification...[and] Sanctification, or the purification of his nature, by which he is properly fitted for the kingdom of glory.

Geneva Bible: That being set apart from the rest of this wicked world, through the working of the Holy Spirit, they should be consecrated to God;

Barnes: Sanctification is not used here in its usual and technical sense to denote "the progressive holiness of believers," but in its more primitive and usual sense of "holiness."

Wesley: Through the renewing and purifying influences of his Spirit on their souls.

V. Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ

The phrase "unto sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," means to cleansing from sin, or to holiness, since it was by the sprinkling of that blood that they were to be made holy.

Obedience and the sprinkling of blood also established the first covenant (Ex 24:7-8).

⁷*And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.* ⁸*And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.*

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:13-14)

VI. Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied

Barnes: The phrase “be multiplied” means, “may it abound,” or “may it be conferred abundantly on you.”

Luther: “Ye have now peace and grace, but still not in perfection; therefore, ye must go on increasing until the old Adam be dead” [Luther].

vs 1 How are the receivers of this letter described and how can you relate to such a description?

vs 2 What roles do the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit play in our salvation?